



# B ' N A I   B ' R I T H   I N T E R N A T I O N A L

## **Statement in Support of House Bills 4616, 4617 and 4618 Supporting Expanded Stem Cell Research**

October 31, 2007 -- B'nai B'rith International (BBI), the global voice of the Jewish community, is the oldest and most widely known Jewish humanitarian, human rights and advocacy organization. With members throughout the United States and more than 50 countries worldwide, BBI is a national and global leader in the area of United Nations reform, international affairs, domestic policy, senior services and Jewish identity. Our Great Lakes Region encompasses the entire state of Michigan.

B'nai B'rith is in support of House Bills 4616, 4617 and 4618 which will ease our state's restrictions on embryonic stem cell research, including the SCNT (Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer) procedure, while increasing penalties for engaging in "reproductive cloning" of humans.

BBI supports embryonic stem cell research because adult stem cells and other potential forms are not sufficient. Michigan's laws are among the most restrictive in the country hindering the potentially life-saving work of our world class research institutions and putting our state at a competitive disadvantage. We must pursue all responsible and ethical avenues of research, of which embryonic research is one.

Jewish tradition and religious law teaches that saving lives is a paramount moral obligation. In keeping with this tradition every major Jewish denomination has endorsed stem cell research because of its potential life-saving ability. These endorsements all include embryonic stem cell research.

It is also an urgent issue for the Jewish community because it is one of the oldest demographic groups in the U.S. Our community is particularly hard-hit by many conditions -- including degenerative diseases and genetically linked cancers -- which could be addressed by this new research. Learning more about cell regeneration could eventually change the prognosis for millions in our community and our nation.

Our commitment to this issue has led us to support Israel's Technion -- Israel Institute of Technology in its highly-regarded and often groundbreaking stem cell research. We want our Michigan institutions to be able to carry out similar work to hasten the day important treatments will be available to all.

Thank you.

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